

How to adjust your UAA habits and find support during COVID.

March 19, 2020

This is challenging but temporary.

We know you are facing a lot of unknowns and disruptions. This will get back to normal, but we don't know when. In the meantime, be patient with yourself, your classmates, and your instructors. Take care of your well-being first. Use this guide for helpful UAA resources and success tips to stay on track.

Resources

[Learning Commons](#)

[Blackboard Help](#)

[Disability Support Services](#)

[Academic Advising](#)

[UA coronavirus website](#)

[Student Health & Counseling](#)

[Seawolf Tech Portal](#)

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Helping Seawolves Stay on Track

We will get through this together.

In this resource guide, find helpful tips on how to:

- Stay organized
- Avoid multitasking
- Make the most of video lectures
- Set a schedule
- Adopt new study strategies
- Work with a group or team
- Stay connected to others

Note: See the links of the left side to access the Learning Commons for academic tutoring and coaching, get help with Blackboard or other technology, locate academic advisors, and get counseling or health care. UAA is committed to helping all Seawolves stay on track!

Seawolf Strategies for Studying, Planning, and Teamwork

Your academic habits may need to change. While more of your coursework and teamwork will be online and remote, here are some strategies that can help you deal with the uncertainty and stay on track.

Stay organized.

With so many fast changes, you might be reliving that first-week-of-class confusion at a finals-week pace. Here are some things you might want to keep track of for each class:

- Instructional changes
 - Are in-person parts of the class changing?
 - What are the in-person parts of this course? (lecture, lab, etc)

- Where can you find it or how do you access it? (live-stream, lecture capture)
- Is it at a specific time or can you watch it anytime? Are assignments changing?
- Assignment and Syllabus changes
 - Are there new due dates?
 - Is how you're submitting your assignments changing?
 - Are quizzes or exams offered virtually?
 - What should you do if you need help?
- Communication changes
 - Is your course offering virtual office hours?
 - When and on what platform? Is there an online forum for asking questions?

One example of a way you could keep track:

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Important dates	Weekly quiz due Friday 11:59pm Bb.	Take-home exam due 4/24 8:00am Bb	Paper due 4/17 11:59pm Bb
Big changes	No lab. Live lecture.	Discussion optional. Recorded lectures.	May do group paper instead of group project.
Important links	Lecture link. Office hours link.	Discussion link. Lecture link.	Group paper google folder link.

Avoid multitasking.

Many people think they can do multiple things at once. But research shows us that only about 2% of the population can multitask. Some downsides of multitasking include:

- **Assignments take longer.** Each time you come back to an assignment (e.g., from Instagram), you need to get familiar with it, find your spot, remember what you were going to do next, etc.
- **You're more likely to make mistakes.** Distractions and switching between tasks tires out the brain.
- **You'll remember less.** When your brain is divided, you're less able to commit what you're learning to long-term memory (because it doesn't get encoded properly into your brain). What to do instead When you need to study something important, consider *The Magic of Monotasking*.

Here are some helpful tips to consider:

- **Focus:** work on one thing at a time.
- **Work in short bursts:** focus for 25 or 50 minute periods by using the [pomodoro method](#)
- **Take breaks:** reward yourself with 5-10 minute breaks

Making the most of video lectures.

- **Follow your instructor's schedule.** Staying on a schedule will help you have a feeling of normalcy and prevent you from falling way behind.

- **Find out how to ask questions.** Is there a chat feature? Is there a discussion forum?
- **Close distracting tabs and apps.** Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think!
- **Take notes** as you would if you were there in person.
- **Watch recordings at normal speed.** Research shows that playback speed of 1.5x can lower your retention and can result in lower scores on assessments.

Set a schedule.

As the situation unfolds, you may have fewer social commitments, group meetings, or work hours. Setting a schedule for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated. If you don't already keep a weekly or daily calendar, try something like the example below to organize your time. Include time for exercise and self-care.

Schedule Template

Adopt new strategies.

Your routines may have to adjust during this time. Look for ways to adapt your usual habits or form new ones. For example:

- If you usually study in a coffee shop or library, ask yourself what kind of environment helps you study. See if you can recreate that at home. Maybe it's studying in a chair, rather than on your bed or couch, or moving to a new spot when you change tasks. If you feel you need background noise, consider a white noise app.
- If you always study in groups, try a virtual or even phone-based study session with your group.
- If you thrive on tight timelines, but now have a more open schedule, think about how working with others or setting up a schedule can recreate that for you. When that gets hard, see if you can even do fifteen minutes at a time.

Work with a group or a team.

Group projects will look a little different, but it is totally possible. Try not to procrastinate by using these tips:

- **Meet regularly** through videos chats, text, or other UAA tools.
- **Plan your meeting topics.** Try to set the purpose of your meeting in advance.
- **Take notes in a shared doc** so you can all contribute and follow along.
- **Keep videos open when you can.** As long as you can see whatever you need to collaborate, aim to keep the video visible on your computer screen. It'll help you see the expressions of your teammates and stay connected to each other.
- **Check on each other and ask for backup.:** If someone has been absent from your group meetings or chat, reach out to them. If you aren't getting responses within a day or two, let your instructor know.

Stay connected to other people.

Connecting with family and friends might be more important than ever. Stay in touch with instructors, classmates, and group mates to successfully continued classwork. Here are a few ideas:

- **Schedule video calls with friends and family.** Talking with loved ones is often really helpful when you're stressed or nervous about something. Taking a break to have a laugh is also important.
- **Use Hangouts in Piazza.** to connect with classmates to talk through a tough problem
- **Attend virtual office hours or study groups** so that you can stay up on your coursework.

Finally, check Blackboard and your UAA email daily for updates from your instructors and the university. Set a reminder on your phone so you are sure to check in every day!

Please remember, this will pass. If COVID has disrupted your travel plans, ended a research project or recital you were excited about, or for any reason feels like it came at the worst possible time, remember that THIS IS TEMPORARY. You will find your way when it settles down. You'll get back on track, and things will get back to normal. We don't know when, but it will happen. Until then, take a deep breath, do your best, get some rest, and use this guide to help you rethink your strategies for planning, studying, and accessing resources. And, of course WASH YOUR HANDS!
